

A Short History of South East Asia

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Foreword.

South East Asia is taken in this history to include the countries of the Asian mainland south of China, from Burma in the west to Vietnam in the east and the islands from Sumatra in the west to the Philippines and New Guinea in the east.

It does not include Taiwan (Formosa), whose history seems to be more naturally part of that of China. But it does include Hong Kong and Macao, the British and Portuguese possessions on the south China coast, as their history is bound up with that of South East Asia rather than with that of China.

With so many different countries being covered, the history of any one country is necessarily fragmented. The following index makes it possible to read the history of each, if so desired, more or less consecutively.

Chapter 1. Early Movements of Peoples : Indian Influence : The First States on the Mainland.

The peoples of maritime South East Asia - present-day Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines - are thought to have migrated southwards from southern China sometime between 2500 and 1500 B.C. They continued to have contacts with the Chinese civilisation (well established in the second millennium B.C.), but the influence of the other long-established civilisation of India gradually became predominant among them, and among the peoples of the South East Asia mainland.

Indian traders*, adventurers, teachers and priests continued to be the dominating influence in South East Asia until about A.D. 1500, and Indians often ruled the earliest states in these regions. Hinduism and Buddhism both spread to these states from India and for many centuries existed there with mutual toleration. Eventually the states of the mainland became mainly Buddhist.

Cambodia (Funan). The first of these "Indianised" states to achieve widespread importance was Funan, in Cambodia, founded in the 1st century A.D. - according to legend, after the marriage of an Indian Brahman into the family of the local chief. These local inhabitants were the Khmer people. Khmer was the former name of Cambodia, and Khmer is their language.

The Hindu-Khmer empire of Funan flourished for some 500 years. It carried on a prosperous trade with India and China, and its engineers developed an extensive canal system. An elite practised statecraft, art and science, based on Indian culture. Vassal kingdoms spread to southern Vietnam in the east and to the Malay peninsula in the west.

Malaya. The Malay peninsula had been settled during the period around 2000 to 1500 B.C. by Mongoloid tribes from south-western China, who mixed with other tribes to become the ancestors of the Malays. The Malays came under Indian influence from about the beginning of the Christian era.

Vietnam. At the eastern extremity of South East Asia, northern Vietnam was originally occupied by Indonesian peoples. About 207 B.C. a Chinese general, taking advantage of the temporary fragmentation of the Chinese Empire on the collapse of the Ch'in dynasty, created in northern Vietnam the kingdom of Annam. During the first century B.C. Annam was reincorporated in the Chinese Empire of the Han dynasty; and it remained a province of the Empire until the fall of the T'ang dynasty early in the 10th century. It then regained its independence, often as a nominal Vassal of the Chinese Emperor.

In south-central Vietnam the Chams, a people of Indonesian stock, established the Indianised kingdom of Champa about A.D.400. Although subject to periodic invasions by the Annamese and by the Khmers of Cambodia, Champa survived and prospered.

Burma. At the western end of the South East Asian mainland, Lower Burma was occupied by the Mon peoples, who are thought to have come originally from western China. In Lower Burma they supplanted an earlier people, the Pyu, of whom little is known except that they practised Hinduism. The Mons, strongly influenced by their

contacts with Indian traders as early as the 3rd century B.C, adopted Indian literature and art and the Buddhist religion; and theirs was the earliest known civilisation in South East Asia. There were several Man kingdoms, spreading from Lower Burma into much of Thailand, where they founded the kingdom of Dvaravati. Their principal settlements in Burma were Thaton and Pegu.

From about the 9th century onwards Tibeto-Burman tribes moved south from the hills east of Tibet into the Irrawaddy plain, founding their capital at Pagan in Upper Burma in the 10th century. They eventually absorbed the Mons and their cities, and adopted the Mon civilisation and Buddhism. The Pagan kingdom united all Burma under one rule for 200 years from the 11th to 13th centuries. The zenith of its power was in the reign of King Anawratha (1044-1077), who conquered the Mon kingdom of Thaton. He also built many of the temples for which Pagan is famous. It is estimated that some 13,000 temples once existed in the city - of which some 5,000 still stand.

Thailand and Laos. At about the same time as the Burmese invasion of Burma, another group of people, the Thai, began moving south and west from their homeland, the Thai kingdom of Nan Chao in southern China. They settled in northern Thailand, and later, in the 10th and 11th centuries, in Laos.

Cambodia (Chen-La and Angkor). To return to Cambodia:- Late in the 6th century A.D. dynastic struggles caused the collapse of the Funan empire. It was succeeded by another Hindu-Khmer state, Chen-la, which lasted until the 9th century.

Then, a Khmer king, Jayavarman II (about 800-850) established a capital at Angkor in central Cambodia. He founded a cult which identified the king with the Hindu God Siva - one of the triad of Hindu gods, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, Siva the god symbolising destruction and reproduction.

The Angkor empire flourishes from the 9th to the early 13th century. It reached the peak of its fame under Jayavarman VII at the end of the 12th century, when its conquests extended into Thailand in the west (where it had conquered the Mon kingdom of Dvaravati) and into Champa in the east. Its most celebrated memorial is the great temple of Angkor Wat, built early in the 12th century.

This summarises the position on the South East Asian mainland until about the 12th century. Meanwhile, from about the 6th century, and until the 14th century, there was a series of great Maritime empires based on the Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Java.

* In early days these Indians came mostly from the ancient Dravidian Kingdom of Kalinga, on the south-eastern coast of India. Indians in Indonesia are still known as "Klings", derived from Kalinga.

Chapter 2. The "Indianised" Empires of Sumatra and Java.

In the islands of South East Asia the first organised state to achieve fame was the Hindu-ised Malay kingdom of Srivijaya, with its capital at Palembang in southern Sumatra. Its commercial pre-eminence was based on command of the sea route from India to China between Sumatra and the Malay peninsula (later known as the Straits of Malacca).

In the 6th – 7th centuries Srivijaya succeeded Funan as the leading state in South East Asia. Its ruler was the overlord of the Malay peninsula and western Java as well as Sumatra. Like most of the early kingdoms of South East Asia, Srivijaya was Indian in culture and administration, and Buddhism became firmly entrenched there.

The expansion of Srivijaya was resisted in eastern Java, where the powerful Buddhist Sailendra dynasty arose. (From the 7th century onwards there was great activity in temple building in eastern Java. The most impressive of the ruins is at Borobudur, considered to have been the largest Buddhist temple in the world.)

Sailendra rule spread to southern Sumatra, and up to Malay peninsula to Cambodia (where it was replaced by the Angkor kingdom). In the 9th century the Sailendras moved to Sumatra, and a union of Srivijaya and the Sailendras formed an empire which dominated much of South East Asia for the next five centuries.

With the departure of the Sailendras a new kingdom appeared in eastern Java, which reverted from Buddhism to Hinduism. In the 10th century this kingdom, Mataram, challenged the supremacy of Srivijaya, resulting in the destruction of the Mataram capital by Srivijaya early in the 11th century. Restored by King Airlangga (about 1020-1050), the kingdom split on his death; and the new state of Kediri, in eastern Java, became the centre of Javanese culture for the next two centuries, spreading its influence to the eastern part of island South East Asia.

The spice trade was now becoming of increasing importance, as the demand by European countries for spices grew. (Before they learned to keep sheep and cattle alive in the winter, they had to eat salted meat, made palatable by the addition of spices.) One of the main sources was the Molucca Islands (or "Spice Islands") in Indonesia, and Kediri became a strong trading nation.

In the 13th century, however, the Kediri dynasty was overthrown by a revolution, and another kingdom arose in east Java. The domains of this new state expanded under the rule of its warrior-king Kartanegara. He was killed by a prince of the previous Kediri dynasty, who then established the last great Hindu-Javanese kingdom, Majapahit.

By the middle of the 14th century Majapahit controlled most of Java, Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, part of Borneo, the southern Celebes and the Moluccas. It also exerted considerable influence on the mainland. After 500 Years of supremacy Srivijaya was superseded by Majapahit.

The various Indianised states and empires of this first 1500 years A.D., though founded by Indian colonisation and maintaining diplomatic contacts with India, remained politically independent of the Indian kingdoms. The only exception to this

was the temporary conquest of Malaya by the Chola kingdom of southern India in the 11th century, but the Sailendra kings of Srivijaya were victorious in a long war against the Chola armies.

Chapter 3. The Repercussions of the Mongol Conquest of China.

At the beginning of the 13th century the situation on the mainland was in Burma the Pagan kingdom; the Malay peninsula under Srivijaya-Sailendra rule; in Cambodia the Khmer kingdom of Angkor, also ruling some of Thailand; Thai settlements in northern Thailand and Laos; and in Vietnam the kingdom of Annam in the north and Champa in the south.

Then the great Mongol irruption in the 13th century had repercussions throughout South East Asia. Early in the century the first of the Mongol leaders, Jenghis Khan, conquered northern China; and in 1251 his grandson Kublai Khan, appointed Governor of China, set about the subjugation of the south.

Thailand (Siam). In the course of this subjugation the ancient Thai kingdom of Nan Chao in Yunnan (southern China) was crushed. The result was a mass movement of Thai peoples southwards. At first divided into principalities, vassals of the Khmer king, they founded in 1238 the kingdom of Sukothai in west central Thailand. King Ramkamhaeng adopted the Khmer alphabet and gave the Thais a written language; and he introduced Buddhism into his kingdom.

In 1350 Prince Ramatibodi founded a rival Thai kingdom in the south, with its capital at Ayuthhia. This soon superseded Sukothai. Ramatibodi, generally regarded as the first King of Siam (or Thailand) was an enlightened ruler. He brought in a new code of law and his armies drove the Khmer back into Cambodia. The Ayuthhia kingdom survived for over 400 years, for much of which Siam was engaged in war with the Khmer in the east and then with Burma in the west.

Cambodia. In the 13th century the Khmer kingdom in Cambodia began to decline, owing to a succession of weak rulers, and perhaps due to the undermining of the Brahman government by the spread of Buddhism. Thai invasions in the late 13th and early 14th centuries three times captured Angkor, which was abandoned in 1431 as being within too easy reach of Thai expeditions.

The capital was moved to Phnom Penh in south eastern Cambodia. Thereafter the Khmer domains steadily diminished. The Thais encroached in the north and west, and the Vietnamese in the east. The Khmer kings were forced from time to time to recognise Siamese suzerainty.

Laos. In 1353 - about the same time as the foundation of the Thai kingdom of Ayuthhia - a Buddhist Thai settlement at Luang Prabang in northern Laos united neighbouring communities to form the first Laotian kingdom of Lan Xang (the "land of a million elephants"). Two hundred years later, conflict with Siam and Burma forced the transfer of the capital further south, to Vientiane, but the kingdom maintained its independence.

Vietnam. Further east, Champa in southern Vietnam was subjected in the 13th century to further attacks by the northern Vietnam kingdom of Annam (and towards the end of the century Kublai Khan sent unsuccessful expeditions against both

Annam and Champa). In the 14th century Champa became a vassal of Annam, and in the next century was gradually absorbed by Annam until it finally disappeared.

During the 16th century Annam was divided by civil war, but at the end of the century it was re-united under the Trinh dynasty.

Burma. In Burma, Kublai Khan's conquest of southern China had devastating repercussions. The Pagan kingdom rejected Kublai Khan's demands for tribute - and raided Yunnan - whereupon the Mongol armies invaded Burma (1287) and the power of Pagan was destroyed.

The disruption was taken advantage of by some of the Thai tribes (known in Burma as Shans) displaced from Nan Chao. They moved into Burma and set up a number of petty states in the centre and north of the country. In the south the Mons established a state based on Pegu (notable for having for a time in the 15th century the only female ruler in Burmese history - Queen Shin Sawba).

The Burmese abandoned Pagan, which was occupied by the Mongols for thirty years, and in 1365 made Ava in central Burma their new capital. Further south, Toungoo became another centre of Burmese power.

Two centuries later, in 1527, Ava was captured and destroyed by the Shans, and Toungoo became the Burmese capital. King Tabin Shweti (1531-1550) of the Toungoo dynasty then conquered the Mon kingdom of Pegu and such of central Burma. His successor Bayinnaung subjugated the Shans, took Ava, and for a time Siam and Luang Prabang (Laos) came under his control.

The Thais soon recovered, and invaded Burma. This, and internal rebellions, broke up Burma into a collection of small states, which were re-united in the 17th century by King Anaukpetlun. He moved the capital back to Ava, and Burma under the Toungoo dynasty then retired into isolation from the outside world for the next hundred years.

Chapter 4. The Coming of Islam.

Indonesia. To return to maritime South East Asia: we have seen (end of Chapter 2) that in the middle of the 14th century the Hindu-Javanese kingdom of Majapahit held sway over an island empire and exerted considerable influence on the mainland. But it was already facing two threats to its commercial and cultural eminence. In Malaya it was challenged by the rising power of Siam; and in the islands its authority was being undermined by the arrival of Islam.

The islands had been in contact with Islam, through Arab traders, for many centuries; but their traditional cultural dependence on India prevented Islam from being acceptable to them until Islam was firmly established under Moslem rulers in the north of India itself, at about the end of the 12th century. Then, in the 13th century, Indian merchants from Gujerat (in north-western India) converted to Islam some of the ports of northern Sumatra. From there Islam spread to the Malay peninsula, Java, and the Philippines.

Malaya. In Malaya the rise of Islam was bound up with the foundation and subsequent importance of the settlement of Malacca on the west coast. It was founded at the beginning of the 15th century, traditionally by a Sumatran prince, Parameswara, who had fled from the island of Temasek (Singapore). (Temasek in the late 14th century was the scene of struggles between the failing power of Srivijaya, its successor Majapahit, and Siam. In the course of these struggles it was destroyed.)

Parameswara was converted to Islam, which under him and subsequent rulers spread throughout the peninsula. Malacca, situated at a strategic point on the trade routes linking India, South East Asia and China, became the main trading port of the East.

For a hundred years (the 15th century) Malacca maintained its independence, protected in its early years from Siamese aggression by the diplomatic activity of the Ming rulers of China.* And Malacca became the centre of Islam in South East Asia.

Indonesia. Meanwhile in Indonesia the Majapahit empire broke up into a number of small and weak Moslem states. The island of Bali alone remained - and still remains - Hindu in religion.

The Philippines. The Philippines, so far barely mentioned in this history, had been occupied for many centuries by a mixture of Malays and Indonesians who were organised in tribal units known as "barangays". They had their own culture, and traded extensively with Indian, Chinese, and Arab merchants; but they seem to have managed to keep themselves isolated from the various imperial struggles of South East Asia. Many of them were converted to Islam during the 13th to 15th centuries, but they remained uninvolved in outside affairs until the Europeans arrived there in the 16th century.

Apart from Malaya, Islam made little impact on the mainland of South East Asia, which remained overwhelmingly Buddhist.

*Between 1405 and 1433 China sent many naval expeditions and diplomatic missions to all the lands bordering the Indian Ocean and the South China Seas. They went in search of commerce and military prestige. Then this activity suddenly ceased - leaving the way open for the subsequent exploitation of the Far East by Europeans. The reasons for the change of policy were purely domestic - mainly the jealousy of the civil service of an enterprise which was commanded by a palace eunuch, the Moslem Chang Ho, and not under their control.

Chapter 5. The Arrival of the Europeans : The Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the Dutch.

The Portuguese. Towards the end of the 15th century the Portuguese launched a series of great voyages of exploration, aimed at establishing trade routes to the East - particularly to India and to the Spice Islands. (These islands had been described by Marco Polo after his return from China nearly two centuries earlier.)

In 1488 Bartholomew Diaz rounded the south of Africa. Ten years later Vasco de Gama reached India by this route. In 1505 the Portuguese conquered most of Ceylon, and in 1510 they founded the trading settlement of Goa on the west coast of India.

Malacca. Now masters of the sea routes in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese realised the vital importance of Malacca to the economic domination of South East Asia. In 1511 they attacked and captured it from the Moslem rulers. They then aimed at control of the Spice Islands (the Moluccas), and here they encountered the rivalry of Spain.

The Spaniards. In 1519 Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese in the service of Spain, set out for the Moluccas via the south of America. He reached the Philippines, where he was killed in an encounter with the inhabitants; but some of his fleet continued to the Moluccas - and eventually one ship got back to Spain, the first to circumnavigate the globe.

The rivalry of Spain and Portugal in the Moluccas ended with the Portuguese in control, whereupon Spain turned her attention to the Philippines.

The Philippines. In the course of twenty years from 1564 the Spaniards conquered most of the Philippine islands from the local Moslems. The islands were named the Philippines in honour of King Philip II of Spain. The capital was the Spanish fortress settlement of Manila. The Spanish priests set about the conversion of the inhabitants to Roman Catholicism; and as previous cultures had had much less impact in these islands than in the rest of South East Asia the Filipinos, in the course of the following centuries, became almost completely Christianised and Westernised. Spanish rule continued for over three centuries, until 1898.

Macao. Portuguese domination of the Asian sea trade routes was further extended by the acquisition from China in 1557 of the lease of Macao on the Chinese mainland (near Hong Kong) - as a reward for overcoming the pirates of the south China seas. Macao later became a Portuguese possession, which it still is.

But towards the end of the 16th century Portuguese pre-eminence in the East began to wane, particularly after 1580 when their royal line died out and Portugal was united - forcibly - with Spain under Philip II. (Portugal regained her independence 60 years later, in 1640.)

The Dutch and Indonesia. Spain was at this time engaged in a long struggle in Europe to retain possession of the Netherlands. In Belgium she succeeded, but the Dutch won their independence, nominally in 1648, but in practice some 40 years earlier. The deciding factor in this struggle was the Dutch prowess at sea, and long

before the end of the war adventurous Dutchmen were sailing far and wide in search of trade.

When Portugal came under his rule, Philip of Spain closed the port of Lisbon to the Dutch. This led to a great expansion of Dutch shipping, which now went to the East Indies for the spices previously picked up at Lisbon. The Dutch East India Company was formed in 1601, and soon displaced the Portuguese as the dominant trading power in the East. (The English also formed their East India Company, in 1600. At first the English company showed an interest in South East Asia, but they were prevented by the Dutch from establishing themselves there and withdrew to concentrate on trade with India.)

Between 1595 and 1620 the Dutch set up trading posts in Java, the Moluccas, Celebes, Timor, and Sumatra - and Borneo, which was later abandoned. Their main settlement was Batavia (now Djakarta) in Java. In 1641 they drove the Portuguese from Malacca, and in 1658 from Ceylon. Portuguese possessions in the East were reduced to Goa in India, Macao in China, and some of the island of Timor in the East Indies.

The purpose of the Dutch was trade, but they eventually acquired territorial possessions by treaty or conflict with the local Moslem states. The Dutch East India Company thus gradually gained partial political control of much of Indonesia.

From 1650 to 1713 Holland was involved in a series of wars against England (for maritime supremacy and then against the aggressive power of France under Louis XIV. She survived, but the wars crippled her financially, and naval superiority passed to England. The Dutch East India Company still prospered, but Holland's commercial power had passed its peak; and during the 18th century the Company got into increasing financial difficulty and become inefficient and corrupt. It was near financial collapse when the Wars of the French Revolution started in 1792.

Note. - **Formosa.** Formosa is not included in this history of South East Asia; but - to complete the picture of European intrusion into the islands of this region in the 16th century the Portuguese 'discovered' Taiwan in 1590, and named it Formosa. They never settled there, but the Dutch and Spaniards did so in the 17th century, until they were expelled by the Chinese.

Chapter 6. The 17th and 18th Centuries on the Mainland.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, while the Dutch were consolidating their position in the East Indies, and Spain her rule in the Philippines, a good deal of internal strife and external wars continued amongst the countries of the mainland.

Vietnam. In Vietnam the Trinh dynasty in Annam lasted throughout this period, though by no means in control of the whole country. The south was in Cambodian hands until about 1760, and for over a hundred years the rival Nguyen family ruled over a separate kingdom based on Hue in central Vietnam. (The northern kingdom during this period of division came to be known as Tonkin.) In 1802 Vietnam was unified under the Nguyen dynasty, with its capital at Hue.

Cambodia. Cambodia, driven from the Mekong delta in southern Vietnam between 1700 and 1760, then continued to be a prey to Siamese interference in the west.

Laos. Laos in the 17th century was comparatively peaceful, but at the end of the century an internal struggle split the country into three separate kingdoms. They were centred on Luang Prabang in the north, Vientiane in the centre, and Champassak in the south.

Siam. For most of the 17th century Siam after her wars with Burma in the 16th century was also peaceful and prosperous. In this century Europeans made trading contacts in Siam, resulting in rivalry between the Dutch and the French the latter were taking their first steps into South East Asia. (The English also entered the competition. The East India Company had a factory at Ayuthhia for some years, but they withdrew in favour of the Dutch, as they did from the East Indies.)

The French went further than trade, and tried to get Siam to accept Christianity. In this endeavour, and in their attempts to secure a privileged position in Siam, they had the support of a Greek adventurer Constantin Paulkone, who had become the King's adviser and first minister. This led to a palace revolution in 1688, in which Paulkone was assassinated, and a period of civil war. For the next 150 years Siam tried to keep aloof from Western influence.

In the 18th century Siam's power declined. The decline culminated in a Burmese invasion in the 1760s when Ayuthhia, the capital since 1350, was totally destroyed.

The Thais rallied from this disaster, and in 1782 General Chakri became King Rama I of the Chakri dynasty, with a new capital at Bangkok. (The Chakri dynasty, in which the kings all take the name Rama, still continues at the present time.) Under the new dynasty Siam expanded once more, at the expense of Burma, Cambodia, Vientiane (Laos) and northern Malaya.

Burma. In Burma the Toungoo dynasty collapsed after a Mon revolt in 1740, but the country was re-united in 1752 by Alaungpaya, who made Rangoon his capital. His successors repelled a Chinese invasion, temporarily conquered Siam (as mentioned above), and encroached westwards and northwards into Indian territory. Early in the 19th century this brought Burma into conflict with the British East India Company, now virtually rulers of India.

Chapter 7. The 19th Century : The British and the Dutch.

Burma. Burmese advances into Arakan towards the end of the 18th century, and then into Manipur and Assam in 1822, led to the first Anglo-Burmese War in 1824-26. This ended with the British annexation of Arakan and Tenasserim (the latter is the long strip of territory between Siam and the western coast).

Burmese interference with British trade caused a second war in 1852-54. As a result of this, Britain annexed Lower Burma, including Rangoon and Pegu.

Then a revolution in Burma led to the deposition of the king; and a new king, Mindon Min (1853-1878), friendly to the British, came to the throne. He built a new capital, Mandalay, near Ava. His successor, Thibaw, reverted to anti-British trade policies, causing a third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885. (India itself was now directly under British government rule, East India Company rule having ceased in 1858.)

This third war ended the Kingdom of Burma. Thibaw was deposed, and Britain took over the rest of the country, though the Shan states in the east were not subdued for several years. For the next fifty years Burma was governed as a province of British India.

The Malay Peninsula. The British East India Company, having withdrawn from competition with the Dutch in maritime South East Asia in the 17th century, returned towards the end of the 18th century to protect its increasing trade with China. The first British settlement was the island of Penang, off the west coast of the Malay peninsula. It was bought in 1790 from the local Sultan of Kedah.

The Dutch East Indies. Then, with the outbreak of the Wars of the French Revolution, Holland was overrun by the French and became her unwilling ally for nearly twenty years from 1795. During this period the British took Malacca, Sumatra, Java (and Ceylon) from the Dutch, but returned them (except Ceylon) to Holland when she regained her independence at the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

While a British possession Java was administered for five years (1811-16) by Stamford Raffles*, an East India Company officer, who then became Governor of Sumatra until it was returned to the Dutch. Raffles had liberal ideas on colonial administration, which he wanted to put into practice elsewhere; and in 1819, at his instigation the Company acquired the lease (and later the cession) of the island of Singapore from the Sultan of Johore.

Singapore. Singapore had been practically abandoned since its (Temasek's) destruction over three centuries earlier. When the British acquired it the island was mainly a swampy jungle. Raffles' concept of a port open to the traders of all nations, without restrictions, helped its rapid growth, and it soon outstripped Malacca and became during the 19th century the leading port and strategic centre of South East Asia.

Straits Settlements. In 1824 the British East India Company also acquired Malacca from the Dutch, exchanging it for a British trading post in Sumatra. The three British settlements - Penang, Singapore and Malacca - were administered from 1826 as the

"Straits Settlements"; and Britain became increasingly involved in the political affairs of the neighbouring native Malay states.

In 1867 East India Company rule in the Straits Settlements ceased, and they became a Crown Colony. British influence in the native states grew, until by the early 20th century the whole of the Malay peninsula was under some form of British control replacing Siamese influence in some of the northern states.

There was great economic development during the 19th century, first in tin mining, for which the labour was mainly provided by Chinese immigrants (who worked harder than the Malays), and later in rubber plantations - started from Brazilian seedlings imported via London. The plantation labour came largely from southern India. The mixture of races produced some difficulties, particularly owing to the vast numbers of Chinese - who now comprise more than a third of the population of modern Malaysia and more than three quarters that of Singapore. But on the whole the different communities - British, Malays, Chinese, Indians - lived in peaceful separation from each other.

The Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). The Dutch, having agreed with Britain in 1824 on their respective spheres of interest, continued to rule the Dutch East Indies. The Netherlands government was now in control, the Dutch East India Company having been closed down in 1798.

Owing to a decline in the spice trade in the 18th century, the Dutch had started to exploit the other natural resources of the islands. This brought them into conflict with the remaining semi-independent native rulers. In 1825-30 there was a revolt against the Dutch in Java, which was put down with great difficulty. It led to the further extension of Dutch rule into the interior; and in 1830 also the Dutch introduced the unpopular "culture system" under which the natives had to devote some of their land to the production of coffee, tobacco, sugar and cotton, to be sold at fixed prices to the Dutch firms - which sold them in Europe at a substantial profit. The system was later (1870) relaxed, and a more liberal colonial policy introduced, which led to considerable economic development in the last quarter of the 19th century.

There were, however, further revolts in Java during the 19th century; and it was not until after the end of the century that the Dutch finally subdued the Sultan of Aceh in northern Sumatra (after a struggle lasting some thirty years), and the island of Bali.

Hong Kong. At the end of the 18th century the Manchu dynasty in China wielded immense power, controlling all China, and with Annam, Siam and Burma tributary to them. But then their vigour began to wane, and they ignored the threat to their empire implied by European intrusion in southern Asia. With a policy of isolation, they imposed restrictions on European trade - and refused to allow any foreign embassies in Peking - a policy which led to a war with Britain in 1840-42.

With command of the seas to help them, small British forces routed the Manchu armies. Hong Kong - a hilly and rocky island then inhabited by a few fishermen, and the haunt of pirates - was ceded to Britain, and some Chinese ports were opened to British trade. Similar trade treaties with other Western nations followed.

By subsequent agreements with China Britain obtained the Kowloon peninsula on the mainland opposite Hong Kong in 1860, and in 1898 the 99 year lease of the "New

Territories" on the mainland, greatly increasing the area of the colony. Hong Kong, with a magnificent harbour, became one of the main ports of the East.

*Before this, during the American War of Independence (1775-83), Holland supported the American insurgents, and Britain conquered the Dutch settlements on the west coast of Sumatra returning them to the Dutch at the end of the war.

*Raffles was also the founder of the London Zoo.

Chapter 8. The 19th Century : The French in Indo-China : Siam.

The French, having failed to win India in their contest with the British there in 1756-63, thereafter concentrated their Asian efforts on the eastern countries of South East Asia; but they did not make any territorial encroachments until the second half of the 19th century. The spread of French Influence was then made easier for them by the British victory over China in 1842 and the subsequent Manchu trade agreements with other countries, of which France was one.

Vietnam. In 1859 the French, in order to protect persecuted Catholic missionaries, invaded Annam, at that time still ruled by the Nguyen dynasty and tributary to China. By 1867 they had conquered the south, which became the French colony of Cochin China. By 1885 they had established protectorates over central Vietnam (Annam) and the north (Tonkin) as well.

Cambodia. In 1861 a rebellion in Cambodia led the King to seek foreign aid, and in 1863 he accepted a French protectorate.* In 1884 another treaty with Cambodia gave the French more extensive control.

Laos. The French also at this time challenged Siamese Nomination in Laos, and in 1893 Laos too became a French protectorate.

The French then set about administrative reform and economic development in their new empire of Indo-China (Cochin China, Annam, Tonking, Laos and Cambodia) though they encountered recurrent opposition to their rule, particularly in Tonkin and Cambodia. Their cultural influence was strongest in Cochin China (southern Vietnam).

Siam. With the British taking over Malaya and Burma, and the French controlling Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the only native kingdom which retained its independence in the 19th century was Siam. In the middle of the century, King Mongkut (Rama IV, 1851-68) started the modernisation of the country, opening it to foreign trade, and bringing to it some of the advantages of Western education and medicine. His work was continued by his successor Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910). He abolished the feudal system, reformed the administration, and modernised the financial system, the army, and communications. This programme was assisted by European and American advisers.

During this second half of the century Siam came under increasing pressure from French advances in the east, but her resistance to this pressure was helped by Britain's desire to keep Siam as a buffer between the British and French possessions. Though conceding French possession of Cambodia and Laos, Siam succeeded in surviving within her traditional borders, and in 1896 both Britain and France guaranteed her independence.

* In Cambodia the French found the ruins of Angkor, which had been abandoned In 1431 and had been swallowed by the jungle. Later - in the 1920s - restoration of the temple of Angkor Wat was started.

Chapter 9. The Philippines : Borneo : New Guinea.

The Philippines. In the 1890s a growing nationalist movement in the Philippines resulted in a revolt in 1896 against Spanish rule. The revolt was unsuccessful; but in 1898 United States' intervention in Cuba, which had long been in a state of insurrection against Spain, led to a Spanish-American war - and as part of their war strategy the Americans attacked the Philippines. They destroyed a Spanish fleet in Manila Bay and, helped by Filipino insurgents under their leader Aguinaldo, they quickly conquered the islands. By the peace treaty the Philippines were ceded by Spain to the United States for 20 million dollars.

The Filipino nationalists expected the United States to agree to their immediate independence. In this they were disappointed, and a revolt against the Americans broke out. The revolt lasted several years before the country was finally pacified. The United States then gradually increased Filipino participation in the administration - and the Filipinos continued the struggle for independence, but by parliamentary instead of military means.

Borneo. During the 19th century the island of Borneo, until then the preserve, with little European interruption, of Malay sultanates on the coast and the primitive Dayak tribes in the interior, became divided politically into several parts.

The Dutch had intermittently set up trading stations in Borneo in the 17th and 18th centuries. Then, when Holland regained her independence after the interregnum during the Napoleonic Wars, she resumed her interest in Borneo, and the Dutch became firmly established in the southern part of the island.

The British also were showing an interest. In 1841 James Brooke, a young officer of the East India Company, led a private expedition to northern Borneo, where he helped the Sultan of Brunei* to suppress a revolt. He was rewarded with the grant of the region of Sarawak, and the title of Rajah. For a hundred years the Brooke family remained the white Rajahs of Sarawak.

In the 19th century the British also acquired the (then uninhabited) island of Labuan, off the coast of Borneo, and a protectorate over Sabah in north-eastern Borneo.

The little that was left of the Sultanate of Brunei remained independent, protected by the British. (It was indeed protected - against pirates.) Development in Brunei was slow until, in 1929, large oil fields were discovered there, which made it financially secure.

In 1891 the British and Dutch agreed upon their respective possessions and spheres of interest in Borneo.

Timor and New Guinea. At the far eastern end of the string of islands stretching from Malaya to Australia are Timor and New Guinea.

Timor (mentioned previously) was divided between the Portuguese and the Dutch by an agreement in 1859.

New Guinea was claimed by the Dutch East India Company in the 17th century. Then, in 1828, after the Napoleonic Wars, a regular Dutch administration was set up in western New Guinea, as part of the Dutch East Indies.

In the 1880s Germany, a recent entrant into the field of colonial expansion, acquired north-eastern New Guinea. Alarmed by this German approach to her shores, Queensland (Australia) persuaded Britain to annex the south-eastern part of the island. After Australia was given Dominion status in 1901 she took over from Britain the administration of this part of New Guinea, which was re-named Papua.

The inhabitants of New Guinea were primitive native tribes, a cross between the indigenous peoples of South East Asia and those of the western Pacific islands.

*The name "Borneo" is a European variant of "Brunei".

Chapter 10. The Early Years of the 20th Century : Movements for Independence.

At the beginning of the 20th century virtually the whole of South East Asia, except for Siam, was controlled by the British, the Dutch, the French and the Americans. Under this colonial rule, and generally orderly conditions, the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a period of rapid development - railways, roads, irrigation projects - and expansion of the production of indigenous goods for export. The new 'Western type' economy, though, was alien to the subsistence economy of the traditional Asian way of life; and the native populations often tended to be surpassed in the new money-making competition by the Chinese and Indian immigrants.

During this period there were two major upheavals in the Far East: the emergence of Japan from over 200 years of isolation from the outside world, and her rise in the last three decades of the 19th century to the status of a world power; and the decay and collapse of the Manchu dynasty in China, culminating in the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of a republic.

Neither of these upheavals had any great immediate effect on South East Asia. Japan, with victories over China in 1894 and over Russia in 1904-05 had her sights set on north-eastern Asia (Manchuria) rather than south-eastern, and China was too engrossed with her own affairs to take much interest in what was happening elsewhere. The upheavals did, however, have a longer term effect on conditions and political movements in South East Asia. The chaos in China in the years before and after the Revolution swelled the tide of emigration to the neighbouring countries; the growth and eventual success of Communism in China encouraged the spread of similar ideas in the region; and Japan's defeat of Russia helped to inspire incipient nationalism in the countries under colonial rule, by showing that an Asian nation could hold its own with the West.

In the First World War Holland was neutral, Britain, France, Russia, Japan and the United States all on the Allied side against Germany. The few German possessions in the East - on the China coast and in New Guinea - were quickly taken from her, and the war did not seriously come to South East Asia. (German New Guinea became an Australian "mandated territory" after the war.)

Siam declared war on Germany in 1917, and sent a small expeditionary force to Europe. The Republic of China also declared war on Germany in 1917, hoping to gain a status with the Allies which would protect her against Japan - which had already started on the road to predominance in the Far East by extraction of concessions from China. This aim culminated in a full-scale Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

After the war life went on such the same as before in colonial South East Asia, though movements for national independence gained ground. All the colonial powers made varying degrees of progress towards giving the native peoples some say in local or national government, but in most cases this progress was not fast enough to satisfy national aspirations.

French Indo-China. In French Indo-China the Vietnamese had never willingly accepted French rule. Serious revolts in 1930-31 were suppressed, but agitation continued.

Dutch East Indies. In the East Indies the Dutch were faced both with Islamic nationalists and with Communists. Communist revolts in Sumatra and Java in 1926 were quickly put down; but the Indonesian Nationalists, from 1927 led by Ahmed Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta, caused so much trouble that they and other leaders were in jail or exile for such of the time until the Second World War.

Burma. In Burma, nationalist activity first came mainly from Buddhist monks, and then from English-educated students. Britain agreed to a gradual handing over of power; and in 1937 the administration of Burma was separated from that of India, a considerable measure of self-government being given to the Burmese. But before the start of the Second World War the Nationalists were demanding full independence.

Malaya. Nationalist agitation was least in British Malaya, where the population was mixed in race and where the native states had always retained a degree of self-government. In view of the unsettled condition of the Far East Singapore was developed into a seemingly impregnable base for the British Navy.

The Philippines. In the Philippines the Filipino struggle for independence of the United States has already been mentioned (see previous). In 1935 the islands were given internal self-government as the "Philippine Commonwealth". The first president of the Commonwealth was Manuel Quezon, who had long been the Nationalist leader. The Filipinos were promised complete independence in ten years time.

Siam. In Siam King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1910-25), who was educated in England, continued the policy of modernisation and westernisation. Siam took her place in world affairs by becoming one of the founder members of the League of Nations after the First World War; and her complete independence was underlined by treaties with the major powers abolishing extra-territorial rights which the nationals of those powers had previously enjoyed in Siam.

Siam was still an absolute monarchy; and, in spite of the reforms brought in by the rulers since 1850, absolutism was not in accord with the Western ideas now flowing in to the country. In 1932 a coup d'état established constitutional government. In 1935 King Prajadhipok (Rana VII), dissatisfied with the new regime, abdicated. He was succeeded by his ten year old nephew, and the government was carried on by a council of regency.

The two chief figures in Siamese politics were now the civilian leader Pridi Phanomyong and the military leader General Pibun Songgram. Both had played prominent parts in the 1932 revolution. Pridi was ousted from power by Songgram, who was then the dominant personality in Siam for most of the time until his overthrow in 1958. During that period political coups of one sort or another averaged about one per year; but this gives a rather misleading picture of Siamese instability. The coups affected few people, and were rarely accompanied by violence.

In 1939 a programme of economic nationalism was started, aimed at replacing foreigners (especially Chinese) in commerce and industry. And the name of the country was officially changed to Thailand - "The Land of the Free".

Chapter 11. *The Second World War : The Conquest and Loss of South East Asia*

The Japanese invasion of China in 1937 (see previous) at first met with great success. Many key cities were captured. But the Chinese Nationalists and Communists, who had been at war with each other since 1927, ceased hostilities in order to oppose the Japanese. They showed no sign of capitulation, and Japan was faced with a long war of attrition deep in the interior of China.

Then the Second World War started, and in 1940 Germany overran most of western Europe. With Holland and France occupied by the Germans, and Britain left to fight alone against Germany and Italy, the French, Dutch and British possessions in South East Asia seemed to be at Japan's mercy; and their conquest presented to Japan an attractive alternative to trying to break the deadlock in China. The only problem was whether the United States would intervene. In July 1941 Japan decided to risk it. By the threat of invasion she got the German-controlled French Government to agree to Japanese "protective military occupation" of French Indo-China - and the Japanese then quickly occupied the territory.

The United States then warned Japan against further expansion in the Pacific area. But on 7th December 1941, while negotiations were still in progress, Japan attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii - and within a few days attacked the British forces in Hong Kong and invaded Malaya and the Philippines. In the same month Thailand, under General Songgran, accepted the inevitable and allied herself with Japan. Her territory was then used as a base for a Japanese invasion of Burma.

Thailand declared war on Britain and the United States, but took no active part in it. Indeed, the United States did not accept the declaration, on the grounds that it was forced on Thailand by the Japanese (and after the war the Thai Government announced the war declaration to be null and void).

On December 25th Hong Kong fell to the Japanese. In January 1942 they started the conquest of the Dutch East Indies with landings in Borneo and Celebes. On 15th February, having advanced down the Malay peninsula, they captured Singapore from the land side (its fortifications were directed to the sea), and eliminated British naval power in the Far East. In February-March they occupied Sumatra; and on 1st March they landed in Java, taking it within a week. On 7th March they occupied Rangoon, and went on to complete the conquest of Burma in May. In May also American and Filipino resistance in the Philippines finally succumbed with the surrender of the island fortress of Corregidor at the mouth of Manila Bay. And Japanese troops were in New Guinea, threatening an invasion of Australia. In the course of five months Japan had become supreme in practically the whole of South East Asia, which was occupied by the Japanese for the next three years.

The turning point in the war against Japan came in May-June 1942, when she lost her supremacy at sea to the United States after the naval Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway Island. American and Australian forces halted the Japanese advance in New Guinea; and there then began an island to island advance by the Allies in the Pacific. This stepping-stone advance went on for the next three years, and in 1944 the systematic bombing of Japanese industrial cities started.

In Burma the Japanese proclaimed Burmese independence in 1943 and set up a puppet government. In early 1944 they tried to break through to India via Manipur. The attempt was foiled, and British Empire forces went over to the offensive. They had the assistance of American and Chinese troops in the north, and in the later stages from the defection of the Burma National Army, led by Aung San*, from the Japanese whom they had previously supported. In the course of the next fifteen months the British imperial armies reconquered Burma, entering Rangoon in May 1945. The British then made plans for the invasion of Malaya.

At the same time, in the Philippines, where Filipino guerillas had tied down considerable Japanese forces during the years of occupation, an American counter-invasion started in October 1944, and completed the re-conquest of the islands in July 1945.

In Thailand a resistance movement had been organised by Pridi Phanomyong. In 1944 he became prime minister in place of Songgram, as the war turned against Japan. Secret negotiations with the western Allies prepared the way for the day of liberation from the Japanese.

In August 1945, before the planned British invasion of Malaya had started, Japan capitulated after atomic bombs had been dropped on two of her cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, (The war in Europe was already over, with the collapse of Italy and then of Germany.) All Japan's conquests in South East Asia were returned to their former rulers, and Japan itself was occupied by mainly American forces under General MacArthur (who had commanded the Philippines operations) for the next seven years. And the Japanese were forced to evacuate China. (The Chinese Nationalists and Communists then resumed their civil war. This ended in 1949 with the unification of China under a Communist regime - except for Formosa which remained a separate nation under Chinese Nationalist rule.)

In colonial South East Asia the various native peoples became disenchanted with the Japanese during the occupation years. But the quick Japanese conquests had totally shattered the tradition of Western invincibility and this, combined with three years of intensive Japanese anti-Western propaganda, gave a great impetus to independence movements after the war, and made it difficult for colonial rule to be resumed.

*Aung San, in trouble with the British in 1940 for his extremist activities, escaped to Japan with some of his followers. They returned to Burma with the Japanese invaders in 1942, helping the Japanese campaign by "Fifth Column" action for which the Japanese had trained them. During the Japanese occupation Aung San was appointed Defence Minister in the puppet government and Commander-in-Chief of the Burma National Army. Aung San found that "independence" under Japanese control fell far short of his expectations; and when the British advanced into Burma in 1945 he transferred his allegiance to them, hoping that this would lead to full independence. After the war he became the national leader of Burma, but in 1947 he was assassinated by political opponents.

Chapter 12. *Independence and After : The Philippines.*

The first of the colonised countries to gain full independence was the Philippines. As already mentioned, the United States in 1935 had promised independence in ten years time. It came as soon as practicable after the war, in July 1946. The Philippines then became a republic - after nearly 400 years of colonial rule, under Spain and then under the United States.

The Filipinos hundreds of thousands of whom had fought as guerillas against the Japanese, had suffered severe casualties and the country had been devastated. Enormous damage had been done to industry; Manila, the capital, had been about 80% destroyed; and production of food and raw materials had been substantially decreased. The task of reconstruction was undertaken with massive American financial aid.

Democracy, however, made rather halting progress. The country was largely dominated by powerful wealthy families, and political life was both violent and corrupt. And the work of reconstruction was delayed by an insurrection of the Hukbalahaps (Huks f or short).

The Huks were Communist led ex-guerillas of the People's Army which had fought the Japanese. They now turned against the landowners, and then sought to overthrow the Government. It took some four years in the early 1950s to quell the rebellion. Its suppression, which was probably helped by the dislike of their Communist ideas felt by a predominantly Roman Catholic population, was achieved by Ramon Magaysay, Secretary of Defence 1950-53, and then President of the Republic. Magaysay reduced the corruption in public life, and set about land and other reforms. Unfortunately he was killed in an air crash in 1957.

After that, progress with reform was slow. Poverty remained widespread, social services poor, and political corruption returned. Under President Marcos, re-elected for a second term in 1969, discontent grew. There were mass anti-Government demonstrations, and Huk guerilla activity started again. In 1972 Marcos placed the country under martial law, and in 1973 he announced a new constitution enabling him to rule indefinitely with unlimited powers.

As well as the Huks, another problem which has faced the Government is a continuing secession movement among the Moslem minority. They - the Moros - number about two million, living mainly in Mindanao (the southern island) and the Sulu archipelago. They are a proud and ferocious people, who resisted domination by the Spaniards in colonial times, and by the Japanese during the Second World War.

For external security the Philippines continued to rely mainly on the United States, to whom she leased Philippine bases in 1947, and with whom she signed a mutual defence treaty in 1951. The Philippines was also a founder member of the United Nations; and in 1954 she joined the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) with Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, France, Britain and the United States.

In 1948 the newly-built Quezon City (named after Manuel Quezon, The first President of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935) – became the capital, in place of nearby Manila.

Chapter 13. Independence and After : Burma.

After the Philippines the next colonial territory to attain independence was Burma. Soon after the war Britain set up an interim Burmese government, whose elected Assembly in 1947 decided that Burma should be an independent sovereign republic, outside the British Commonwealth. In December 1947 Britain passed the Burma Independence Act implementing this decision. That Burma did not wish to remain in the British Commonwealth does not seem to have been due to any particular animosity towards Britain, but rather to her desire to remain aloof from any outside entanglements or commitments, and to try to work out her own destiny in isolation.

In doing so, she was immediately beset by many problems. In 1948 there were revolts led by two different groups of Communists, and then a large scale rebellion by one of Burma's several minority racial groups, the Karens - a people thought to be descended from Chinese tribes at some time driven south by the Shans (see previous). The Karens, who live mainly in the Irrawaddy delta, near Rangoon, wanted a separate state within the "Union of Burma" (which is the country's official name). For a time the rebels occupied Mandalay, other towns, and a suburb of Rangoon. Other minority races, including the Shans, also started separatist activities.

Revolts continued throughout the 1950, and U Nu, prime minister almost continuously since independence, failed to deal with them effectively. For this and other reasons General Ne Win removed U Nu in a coup d'état in 1962, and for ten years Burma was ruled by a military dictatorship. In 1972 this regime re-formed itself as a civilian administration, but continued to govern with a one-party system. Unrest among the minority races continued, but government troops have so far prevented further major revolts.

Economically, too, Burma has had its troubles. Before the Second World War Burma was the leading Country in the world in the export of rice. Then, loss of foreign markets during the war, the disturbed state of the country after independence, and the great increase in her own population (from about 16 million in 1947 to about 28 million in 1971), combined to nullify this export trade. And in overall economic development the policy of going it alone has not helped. Her severance of foreign ties has caused a lack of experienced personnel and lack of capital for investment. Burma is torn between the desire to live in seclusion from the rest of the world, preserving her ancient ways and Buddhist traditions, and the desire to establish a prosperous modern economy.

Although keeping aloof from international commitments, Burma joined the United Nations - and indeed provided, in U Thant, the Secretary General of this Organisation from 1961 to 1971.

Chapter 14. *Independence and After : Malaysia and Singapore*

Malaysia. During the Japanese occupation of Malaya the Malays did not suffer unduly. But the captured British suffered from "loss of face" as well as the hardships of imprisonments and the Chinese and Indians were treated harshly. Many Chinese took to the jungle, where they formed guerilla bands, often working with the remnants of the British army. The most effective of the guerillas were those who were Communist-led.

After the war these Chinese Communist guerillas turned against the returning British planters, and started a terrorist campaign in which plantation workers, as well as owners and managers, were murdered and harassed. It took the British Army twelve years, until 1960, to clear up this "Emergency".

Meanwhile Britain went on with plans for the transfer of power. In 1948 Malaya was formed into a loose federation, the old Sultanates (of which there were nine) being left with considerable powers. The other members of the Federation were the old British Straits Settlements (see previous) excluding Singapore, i.e. Penang and Malacca. Singapore was excluded because of Malay fears that the million Chinese in Singapore would dominate the Federation. During the early post-war years the Malays took more interest in politics than they had previously, realising that independence would remove the British presence which shielded them from the commercial dominance of the Chinese.

This independence was granted to the Federation of Malaya in 1957, as one of the nations of the British Commonwealth. The Supreme Head of the Federation was to be elected every five years from among the Malay rulers. The first Supreme Head was the Rajah of Perlis, the smallest of the states.

In 1963 the Federation was extended to include Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah. (The Brooke family ceded Sarawak to the British crown after Borneo was recovered from the Japanese at the end of the Second World War.) The Malay populations of the two Borneo colonies were deemed to balance the Chinese in Singapore. And the Federation became Malaysia. But tension between the Singapore Chinese and the Malays led to Singapore's withdrawal from the Federation two years later. The addition of Sarawak and Sabah also led Sukarno, the pro-Chinese-Communist president of Indonesia (see next chapter) to denounce the Federation as a "British neo-colonialist creation". He declared a "confrontation" with Malaysia, and British forces had to protect the Borneo territories from Indonesian guerillas. The confrontation ceased in 1967, after Sukarno's fall from power in Indonesia.

Tension between Malays and Chinese in Malaya, however, has not ceased. There were race riots between the two communities in Kuala Lumpur (the capital) in 1969, and the constitution was temporarily suspended. The constitution, in fact, favours the Malays, in that Malay is the official language and Islam the national religion - although about a quarter of the population are Buddhists.

However, in spite of this racial problem, Malaysia, which had a long period of stability and economic and social development under British rule, has prospered since independence.

Singapore. After the war Singapore reverted to being a British Crown Colony, with steps being taken towards independence. In 1955 an elected majority assumed governmental responsibility except for defence and foreign affairs. In 1959 Singapore became a fully independent republic within the British Commonwealth - and remained a separate unit within the Commonwealth except for its brief membership of the Malaysian Federation in 1963-65.

The prime minister of the new republic was (and still is in 1977) the Singapore Chinese Lee Kuan Yew. He returned from England in the 1950s with a Cambridge degree in law, and founded the moderately socialist People's Action Party (PAP), which became the ruling party. In the 1960s an extreme left wing opposition party was driven underground, and since 1968 all seats in Parliament have been held by the PAP. Singapore has become a one-party state, the regime becoming increasingly authoritarian. Communism, suspected in 1971 of stirring up conflict between the Chinese and the Malays, has been firmly suppressed.

Meanwhile, Singapore has prospered. The port, in terms of shipping handled, is one of the largest in the world. There has been extensive development of manufacturing industry, and Singapore has become a main banking centre. The general standard of living is probably the highest on the mainland of Asia.

Singapore is, with little doubt, the most efficient country in South East Asia. It is also the cleanest, both physically (there is no rubbish to be seen) and morally. Lee, sometimes ruthless in his methods, trained an incorruptible police force, and has largely stamped out vice and political corruption.

With the withdrawal of the British naval and military presence in South East Asia (except for a small garrison in Hong Kong) Singapore - once the centre of British power in the East - has raised its own defence forces; and in 1971 Singapore and Malaysia joined with Australia, New Zealand and Britain in a Commonwealth defence agreement. Both Malaysia and Singapore are members of the United Nations.

Chapter 15. *Independence and After : Indonesia.*

Modern Indonesia comprises the ex-Dutch possessions in the East Indies - Sumatra, Java, Celebes (now Sulawesi), the Moluccas, Bali, and part of Borneo (Kalimantan), of New Guinea (West Irian) and of Timor - and some 3000 other small islands. It has the fifth largest population in the world - about 124 million - only China, India, Soviet Russia and the United States having more.

During the war-time occupation from 1942 to 1945 Sukarno (see previous) co-operated with the Japanese, and at the end of the war he proclaimed Indonesian independence. The Dutch were faced with the task of virtual re-conquest. After four years of guerilla warfare they abandoned the struggle. Except for Dutch New Guinea Indonesia became independent, with a nominal union with Holland.

New Guinea remained a bone of contention, resulting in the dissolution of the union and the expulsion of Dutch residents from Indonesia. Eventually Dutch New Guinea passed to the United Nations and then (1963) to Indonesia, with the new name West Irian. Sukarno, President of the new republic, was fiercely anti- the colonial powers and pro-communist China. Hatta, his prime minister, worked to co-operate with the West. But Sukarno's power increased, while Hatta's influence waned - and he resigned in 1956. Sukarno then became a dictatorial ruler. In 1957 parliamentary democracy was abolished, and in 1959 Sukarno became prime minister as well as president.

Sukarno also aimed at being considered the leader of the newly independent ex-colonial nations. This ambition led to heavy expenditure on the armed forces and a pretentious building programme, with consequent economic decline. He also had trouble in preserving the unity of the country, with risings in Sumatra and Celebes against the prevailing control of the government by Javanese. (The capital is Djakarta - Batavia re-named - in Java.)

Sukarno's hatred of colonialism and imperialism led to his "confrontation" with Malaysia in 1963, already mentioned. The confrontation caused his withdrawal of Indonesia from the United Nations in 1965 - the first nation to do such a thing.

By 1965, in fact, all seemed set for the transformation of Indonesia into a Communist state, with Sukarno the father of the new system. There were several million members of the Indonesian Communist Party, and many others, including most of the Chinese population (some 3 ½ million), in pro-Communist organisations. Then, from Sukarno's point of view, things went wrong.

A Communist coup in October 1965, in which six generals were kidnapped and murdered, was defeated by General Suharto and the army, supported by the overwhelming majority of Indonesia's Moslems (who form about 85% of the population). In every part of the country thousands of Communists - estimated to total some 300,000 - were killed; Sukarno was ousted from power (though he remained technically president for another two years), and the Communist Party was outlawed.

General Suharto ended the confrontation with Malaysia, re-established economic links with the western nations and returned Indonesia to the United Nations. At home Suharto, who became President in 1968, drastically cut down public spending and started a drive against corruption. Elections in 1971 gave the pro-Government parties a landslide victory; and in 1973 Suharto was elected President for a further term of five years. (Sukarno, stripped of all his powers in 1967, retired from public life. He died in 1970.)

Since 1965 Suharto and his colleagues have rescued Indonesia from the verge of bankruptcy and have checked the runaway inflation which Sukarno's policies had brought about. With American help and American-trained technicians there has been good progress in developing Indonesia's extensive natural resources. The Japanese have also acquired a strong position in the Indonesian economy which was perhaps at least partly the cause of some anti-Japanese riots in 1974. With Holland, relations have much improved during Suharto's time.

One of Indonesia's greatest problems is the large, and perhaps growing, gap between rich and poor - a problem of which Suharto seems aware and aiming to alleviate.

Chapter 16. Independence and After : Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos.

Vietnam. During the Japanese occupation of Vietnam a Nationalist-Communist Organisation, the Vietminh, was formed under the leadership of the Communist Ho Chi Minh. The Vietminh fought against the Japanese, and when the latter withdrew in 1945 Ho proclaimed the independent republic of Vietnam, consisting of the former French provinces of Tonkin, Annam and Cochin China.

In 1946 the French returned. They quickly re-established themselves in Cochin China, but failed to reach agreement with the Vietminh. Then, for eight years, they fought an unsuccessful war to recover the north. In 1954 the French forces suffered a decisive defeat with the fall of the besieged fortress of Dien Bien Phu. An international conference negotiated an armistice, and the country was divided into two: North Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh's Communist government, with its capital at Hanoi; and the anti-Communist state of South Vietnam under Ngo Dinh Diem, with its capital at Saigon. There was to be a general election designed to bring about unification, but the election was never held.

The regime of Ngo Dinh Dien in the south became widely unpopular, through nepotism and intolerance of opposition. His family, devout Roman Catholics, were accused of persecution of the Buddhist majority; and in 1963 he was killed in a military coup d'état. After a series of crises General Nguyen Van Thieu established a constitutional government in 1967.

Meanwhile Ho Chi Minh's objective was to take over the south and unite the whole country under Communist rule. From 1960 onwards he sent arms and troops to support Communist guerillas (the Viet Cong) in South Vietnam, and a war between North and South developed. Ho had the backing of material aid from Communist China and Soviet Russia, while the South relied increasingly on American support. By 1965 the United States was committed to trying to save the South from collapse, and was involved in a full-scale war with the Vietminh.

In 1968, by when there were over half a million American troops in Vietnam, peace negotiations were started in Paris. The United States began to withdraw her troops, but the war went on for another four years. Eventually a cease-fire was agreed in 1973. The United States withdrew the last of her forces, hoping that South Vietnam was now strong enough to stand on her own, and that the country might be peacefully re-united by negotiation.

This hope was not fulfilled. Hostilities were soon resumed, and with the fall of Saigon in 1975 the North won virtual control of the whole country. Vietnam became a Communist state, with Ton Duc Thang as president. (Ho Chi Minh died in 1969.)

Before this war, and American intervention, probably not many people in the West could say with certainty where Vietnam was and what it consisted of. Then, for several years, they were confronted almost daily with pictures of happenings in Vietnam on their television news programmes; and the war in Vietnam became, in Western eyes, a decisive battle to prevent the further spread of Communism in Asia.

Cambodia. During the Second World War Cambodia, under pressure from the Japanese occupying forces, declared its independence of France. But when the French returned after the war King Sihanouk negotiated with them. The result was a considerable degree of self-government. (Sihanouk had been elected king in 1941, before the Japanese invasion.)

With the French defeat in Vietnam in 1954 Cambodia became fully independent. Sihanouk then abdicated the throne (in favour of his father) to become Prime Minister, as leader of the "Popular Socialist Community Party", which won all elections. In 1960, on the death of his father, Sihanouk assumed the title "Head of State".

At first Sihanouk adopted a neutral attitude in foreign affairs, accepting economic aid from both the United States and Communist China. But from 1963 onwards, when he refused further American aid, he became more closely associated with China and with Communist North Vietnam. He allowed the use of Cambodian territory by the Vietminh and Viet Cong as bases for their troops in the war against South Vietnam.

Due to the activities of the Vietnamese Communists, and to the economic stagnation caused by his nationalisation policies, Sihanouk's rule became unpopular. In 1970 he was ousted in a pro-American coup led by General Lon Nol. Cambodia became the Khmer Republic, and Lon Nol was later elected President. Sihanouk set up a rival government-in-exile in China.

From 1970 Cambodia became actively involved in the Vietnam war. American and South Vietnamese forces attacked the Vietminh bases in Cambodia; and during the next three years a general civil war developed. On one side were the Khmer Republican forces assisted by the Americans, and on the other Communist guerillas (the Khmer Rouge) with their North Vietnamese allies. Large areas of the country fell to the Khmer Rouge; and in April 1973, soon after the "cease-fire" in Vietnam and the American withdrawal, the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh, the capital.

The Khmer Republic became a Communist state under Khieu Samphan, the Khmer Rouge leader. A reign of terror followed. Thousands of former government supporters were massacred, and there was a forcible evacuation of the towns. Huge numbers were sent to build new villages in the countryside where - whatever their skills - they were made to work on the land.

In September 1975 Sihanouk returned to Cambodia, but he resigned in April 1976. Khieu Samphan became Head of State.

Laos. When the French returned after the Second World War Laos, like Cambodia, became a largely self-governing kingdom within the French Union. (The King was of the royal house of Luang Prabang which had survived throughout the period of the French Protectorate as rulers of the "Protected Kingdom of Luang Prabang".)

In 1953, during the struggle between the North Vietnamese and the French, Laos was invaded by Vietminh forces, backed by a left-wing Nationalist Organisation, the Pathet Lao. When the war ended in 1954 with the defeat of the French, Laos became fully independent, but strife within the country continued. In 1959 a three-way civil war developed between the neutralists, a right wing party, and the Pathet Lao.

A coalition of these three factions formed in 1962 was short lived; and for ten years from 1963 the civil war continued, between the neutralist government backed by the United States and the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese. The government forces gradually lost ground, and the North Vietnamese used the "Ho Chi Minh trails" through eastern Laos in their prosecution of the war against South Vietnam. The Americans retaliated with bombing raids on the Communist forces in Laos.

In 1973 the cease-fire in Vietnam was followed by a cease-fire in Laos, with an agreement for the formation of a new government in which the old government and the Pathet Lao would have equal power. But after the fall of Saigon in 1975, and the consequent unification of Vietnam under Communist rule, the Pathet Lao forces occupied the whole of Laos. The King abdicated, and the country became the People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

The whole of what used to be French Indo-China (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) was now under Communist control.

Chapter 17. *Remnants of the Colonial Empires.*

Hong Kong. After the expulsion of the Japanese at the end of the Second World War, the British returned to Hong Kong, which became a British colony again. Hong Kong was largely unaffected by the resumed civil war in China (see previous), except that it caused a huge influx of Chinese refugees. The population rose from about 600,000 in 1945 to nearly 2 ½ million ten years later (and by 1975 it was over 4 million, 99% of whom are Chinese).

Communist China, victorious over the Chinese Nationalists in 1949, made no move to evict the British from Hong Kong - though the colony clearly could not be defended against massive Chinese aggression should the Communists decide upon it. Relations between Hong Kong and China have remained coldly correct. There were some Communist-inspired anti-British riots in 1967, but the (Chinese) police remained loyal to the British. It remains to be seen what will be China's attitude when the lease of the New Territories expires in 1997 (see previous).

Meanwhile Hong Kong, still a port of world-wide importance, and a great banking and financial centre, has since the war greatly developed its manufacturing industries, particularly textiles.

Macao and Eastern Timor. Portugal still possesses the port of Macao in southern China, and the eastern part of the island of Timor - the western (ex-Dutch) part being included in Indonesia. Both possessions date from the 16th century. Like Hong Kong, Macao is at the mercy of Communist China, which has so far made no move to claim it.

Papua / New Guinea. Papua (south eastern New Guinea) has been administered by Australia since 1901. North eastern New Guinea, taken from Germany in the First World War, has also since then been administered by Australia, since 1946 as a United Nations Trust Territory. (Western - ex-Dutch - New Guinea became part of Indonesia in 1963)

The island was the scene of intense fighting between the Japanese and American/Australian forces in the Second World War. In 1949 Australia combined Papua and north eastern New Guinea as the Trust Territory of Papua/New Guinea; and the territory became self-governing in 1975, still part, of the British Commonwealth. The indigenous peoples are divided into many tribes. The economy, which has been mainly based on tropical agricultural production, is now boosted by copper mining.

Brunei. The Sultanate of Brunei, in Borneo, remains a self-governing British Protectorate. It preferred not to join the Federation of Malaysia when Sarawak and Sabah did so.

Chapter 18. Thailand Since the Second World War.

After the war General Songgram once more removed the civilian leader Pridi Phanomyong. He remained Prime Minister, except for short periods, until he was himself removed after coups in 1957 and 1958.

Songgram's policy was strongly anti-Communist and pro-American; and this policy was continued by his successor General Sarit Thanarat. Sarit ruled with a benevolent system of martial law until his death in 1963. With American aid this was a time of economic development, particularly in the north-east of the country where the poverty of the people and their proximity to North Vietnam made them vulnerable to the ever-present Communist propaganda.

Sarit was succeeded by Marshal Thanom Kuttikachorn. He intended to restore a democratic constitution, but, largely because of Communist progress, this was deferred until 1968. The first elections for ten years were held in 1969; but two years later Thanom, faced with Communist insurgency, strikes and student demonstrations, abolished the constitution and reverted to government by decree.

The situation, however, worsened, both politically and economically; and in 1973 Thanom's military regime was overthrown after massive student risings, a coup in which, contrary to normal practice, there was some bloodshed. Thanom fled from the country and a civilian government was installed. A new constitution was adopted in 1974, and after elections in April 1976 Seni Pramoj* became Prime Minister. But the civilian leaders did not, in the opinion of the military, take positive enough steps to combat the spread of Communist influence, and in October 1976 yet another coup re-instated military control.

A stabilising and unifying force in all these domestic vicissitudes has been provided by the King, Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX), who came to the throne in 1946. Born in the United States in 1927, and educated in Europe, King Bhumibol is a man of many interests and progressive ideas. He has worked closely with both military and civilian administrations, and is greatly respected by his people.

Throughout all her internal troubles Thailand's foreign policy has remained firmly based on opposition to Communism, friendship with and dependence on the United States, and increasing co-operation with the other non-Communist nations of South East Asia.

Thailand joined the United Nations Organisation in 1946. In 1950 she provided a contingent for the United Nations forces assisting South Korea against the communist aggression from North Korea. In 1954 she joined the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), and the headquarters of the Organisation is at Bangkok. And later she joined the Association of South East Asian Nations (consisting of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), an association formed in 1967 and aimed at promoting the economic progress and stability of these non-Communist states.

In Thailand itself Communist guerilla and terrorist activity grew from the early 1960s onwards, particularly in the jungles of the south and in the north-east. In combating this menace Thailand had the support of the United States - and Thailand supported

the United States' effort in the Vietnam war by allowing the use of her territory for American air bases, and by sending a Thai contingent to help South Vietnam. With the American military withdrawal from the region, and the establishment of Communist regimes along the whole of her eastern borders (in Laos and Cambodia), Thailand had strengthened her defence forces and - as mentioned above - drawn closer to the other non-Communist countries of South East Asia.

*In the Second World War Seni Pramoj was the Thai minister in the United States, where he had succeeded in convincing the Americans that Thailand's declaration of war on them had not been the will of the Thai people, and where he had organised the training of Thai students for guerilla war against the Japanese.

Appendix. - Some Population Statistics.

(Figures are approximate, and relate to the early 1970s.)

Indonesia.

- Population - 124 million (including about 3 ½ million Chinese).
 Density - 170 to the square mile.
 (For comparison - about the same as Scotland)
 Approximate distribution between the main islands
 Java - 80 million.
 Sumatra - 20 million.
 Sulawesi (Celebes) - 7 million.
 Kalimantan (S.Borneo) - 5 million.
 Madura - 2 million. Bali - 2 million.
 Moluccas - 1 million.
 West Irian (New Guinea) - 1 million.
- Official language - Bahasa Indonesia (a form of Malay).
- Religion - Moslems (85%), Christians (9%). The island of Bali is Hindu.
- Percentage literate - about 50%.
- Chief towns :-
 Djakarta (capital) (Java). 4 ¾ million. Formerly Batavia.
 Surabaya (Java) 1 ½ million
 Bandung (Java) 1,200,000.
 Medan (Sumatra) 630,000.
 Palembang (Sumatra) (capital of Sumatra) 580,000.
 Semarang (Java) 560,000
 Ujung Pandang (Sulawesi) 430,000. Formerly Macassar (of hair oil fame).
 (Ruins - Borobudur, in Java).

Thailand.

- Population - 36 million
 Density - 180 to the square mile
- Official language - Thai.
- Religion - 90% Buddhist.
- Percentage literate - about 70%.
- Chief towns Bangkok (capital) 2 ½ million.
 Thonburi 540,000. Adjacent to Bangkok.
 (Ayutthia - ancient capital)

The Philippines.

- Population - 39 million.
 Density - 340 to the square mile.
- Official languages - Pilipino (a Malay-Polynesian language), English, Spanish.
 About half the population are fluent in Pilipino, and about half understand English.
- Religion - Roman Catholics (80%), Protestants (10%), Moslems (5%).
- Percentage literate - about 75%.
- Chief towns Manila (old capital) 1,600,000 In Luzon (northern island)
 Nezon City (new capital) 600,000
 Cebu 340,000.

Burma.

- Population - 29 million.
 Density - 110 to the square mile.
- Minority groups - Karens (about 3 million)
 Shan (about 2 ½ million)
 Kachins (about ¾ million)
 and many others.
- Official language - Burmese (a Tibeto-Chinese language).
- Religion Buddhist (85%), Moslems (4%), Hindus (4%), Christians (3%)
- Percentage literate - about 70%.
- Chief towns Rangoon (capital) 1,800,000.
 Mandalay 360,000.
 (Ruins - Pagan and Ava, ancient capitals.)

Malaysia.

- Population - 11 million.
 Distribution - Malays about 5 million, Chinese about 4 million, Indian and Pakistani about 1 million.
 Density - 85 to the square mile.

Malaysia consists of 13 states, 11 in Malaya, and Sarawak and Sabah in Borneo. The Malayan states are the old British "Straits Settlements" of Penang and Malacca, and 9 Sultanates - Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Negri Sambalan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor and Trengganu.

- Official language - Malay. (English in Sarawak and Sabah).

Religion - Moslems (majority, and "official" religion in Malaya), Buddhists, and others.

Percentage literate - about 50%.

Chief towns Kuala Lumpur- (capital) 600,000. in Selangor.
Georgetown 240,000. In Penang.

Singapore.

Population - 2.1 million.

Density - over 9000 to the square mile.

Distribution - Chinese 1.6 million, Malays about 300,000, Indian and Pakistani about 150,000.

Official languages - Malay, Chinese, English, Tamil (southern Indian).

Religion - Buddhists, Moslems, and others.

Percentage literate about 75%.

*In the Second World War Seni Pramoj was the Thai minister in the

United States, where he had succeeded in convincing the Americans that Thailand's declaration of war on them had not been the will of the Thai people, and where he had organised the training of Thai students for guerilla war against the Japanese.

Hong Kong

Population - 4.2 million (99% Chinese).

Density - over 10,000 to the square mile.

Official language - English.

Religion - Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist.

Percentage literate - 85-90%

Chief towns Victoria (capital) 675,000. On Hong Kong island.
Kowloon 750,000. On the mainland.

Papua New Guinea.

Population - 2.6 million (mainly tribal indigenous)

Density - 15 to the square mile.

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Chief town Port Moresby (capital).

Brunei.

Population - 140,000. About 50% Malay, 30% Chinese, 15% indigenous.
Density - 60 to the square mile.

Official language - Malay.

Religion - Moslems (majority).

Portuguese Dependencies.**Macao.**

Population - 260,000, mainly Chinese.
Density - nearly 50,000 to the square mile.

Eastern Timor.

Population - 600,000, mainly indigenous.

Vietnam.

Population - 40 million. (North Vietnam 22 million, South 18 million.)
Density - 300 to the square mile.

Official language - Vietnamese.

Religion - Buddhists (majority). 8% Roman Catholics in the South.

Percentage literate - 60-65%.

Chief towns Hanoi (capital) 800,000. (In Tonkin, North Vietnam)
 Saigon 1,700,000. Ex-capital of South Vietnam.
 Haiphong 370,000. (North Vietnam)
 Da-nang 350,000. (South Vietnam)
 Hue 150,000. Ex-capital of Annam,

Khmer Republic (Cambodia).

Population - 7 million.
Density 100 to the square mile.

Official language - Khmer.

Religion - 90% Buddhist.

Percentage literate - about 60%.

Chief towns Phnom Penh (capital) 112 million (before the 1975 evacuation.)
(Ruins - Angkor, ancient capital)

Laos.

Population - 3 million.

Density - 30 to the square mile.

Official language - Lao and French.

Religion - Buddhist.

Percentage literate - about 15 - 20%

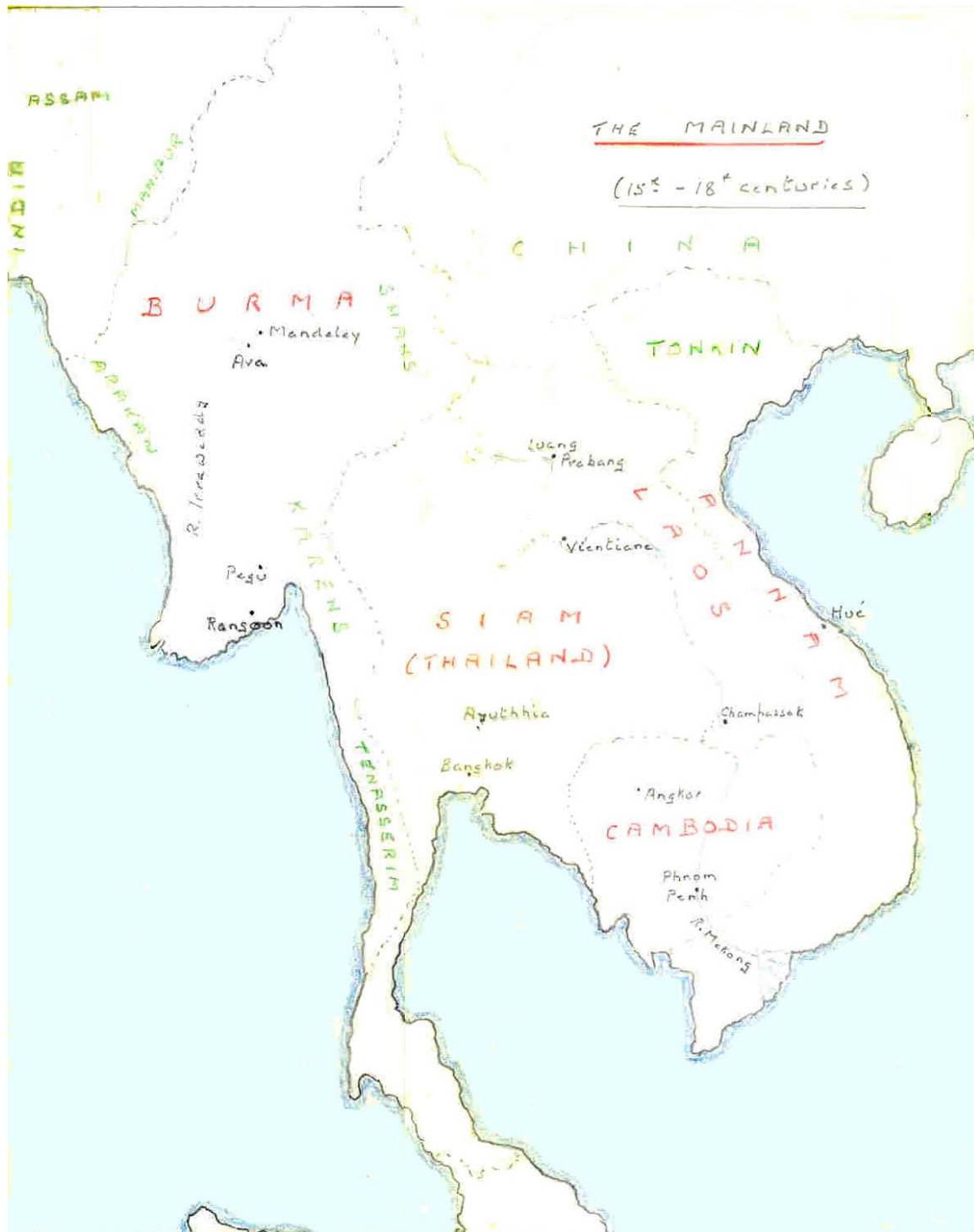
Chief towns Vientiane (capital) 160,000.
Luang Prabang 25,000. Old Royal residence.

Map: South East Asia to the 14th Century

SOUTH EAST ASIA — to the 14th Century.



Map: The Mainland (15th to 18th Centuries)



Map: South East Asia in 1900



Map: South East Asia in 1970

SOUTH EAST ASIA IN 1970.



Indonesia - coloured Yellow.

Malaysia - " Red.

Other British Commonwealth Territories - or underlined Red.

Portuguese - coloured or underlined Green.